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ABSTRACT

A cognitive-structural model for counselor supervision, derived from advances in cognitive psychology, is proposed for facilitating trainee conceptual development and self-efficacy. Within the model, there are recommendations for matching structure in the supervisory relationship to the conceptual complexity and self-efficacy levels of the counselor-in-training. Matching is accomplished through strategies designed to strengthen conceptual schemata and enhance communication, such as empathy and self-as-a-model, and to create cognitive dissonance and promote conceptual development, such as confrontation and dialectic. Cognitive-structural supervision is discussed in terms of personal practice theory construction. The Freud-Jung relationship is treated as an example of an incompletely developed supervisory relationship. The ultimate aid of supervision according to the proposed approach is existential-developmental collaboration and equity in supervision. (Author)

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A COGNITIVE-STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO COUNSELOR SUPERVISION

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Abstract

Recent advances in cognitive psychology and theoretical rapprochement suggest directions for improving counselor education. A cognitive-structural model for supervision is proposed. Within the model, there are recommendations for matching structure in the supervisory relationship to the conceptual complexity and self-efficacy levels of the counselor-in-training. Matching is accomplished through strategies designed to strengthen conceptual schemata and enhance communication, such as empathy and self-as-a-model, and to create cognitive dissonance and promote conceptual development, such as confrontation and dialectic. Cognitive-structural supervision is discussed in terms of personal practice theory construction. The Freud-Jung relationship is treated as an example of an incompletely developed supervisory relationship. The ultimate aim of supervision according to the proposed approach is existential-developmental collaboration and equity in supervision.

A cognitive-structural model for supervision, derived from advances in cognitive psychology, is proposed for facilitating trainee conceptual development and self-efficacy.

Introduction

If there has been a "cognitive revolution" in counseling and psychotherapy (Goldfried, 1982; Mahoney, 1977, 1980; Smith, 1982; Thoresen & Coates, 1978), some reorientation of counselor education perspectives may be necessary in order to take into account the cognitive practice theories of supervisors and counselors-in-training. An emerging cognitive-structural approach to therapy (e.g., Arnkoff, 1982; Sollod & Wachtel, 1980) has contributed to rapprochement among behavioral, psychodynamic, and humanistic schools of thought (Goldfried, 1982; Wachtel, 1977). A cognitive-structural approach to counselor supervision could similarly function to facilitate communication among practitioners from diverse (and probably eclectic) perspectives and to encourage growth in the counselor-in-training, even when the person is supervised by a professional who has a vastly different way of looking at the world.

Several recent articles have addressed variables in the supervisory process that are central to the cognitive-structural position. Blocher (1983) advanced a cognitive developmental approach, which was based upon pioneering work of Kelly (1955) in the domain of personal constructs, Lewin (1935) in the person-in-environment interactional perspective, and Harvey, Hunt, and Schroder (1961) in the area of conceptual complexity and personality organization. A goal of the cognitive developmental approach to supervision is to foster the acquisition of novel, increasingly more complex and comprehensive, views of human interaction and behavior change. Cognitive development, in the approach, was described in terms comparable to movement through the

stages presented by Loevinger's (1976) ego psychology theory. According to Blocher (1983), the cognitive and professional growth of the supervisee is accomplished by the supervisor's arranging individualized learning environments that afford a grasp of the complexities encountered in the counseling relationship. Characteristics of learning environments that promote growth include challenge, involvement, support, structure, feedback, innovation, and integration.

Stoltenberg (1981) advanced a somewhat similar developmental perspective in presenting the "counselor complexity model." According to this model for counselor supervision, the process moves from high levels of structure and didactic instruction to increasingly lower levels of supervisory direction and greater collegiality between the two participants. In a recent report of trainee expectations for the supervisory process, Friedlander and Snyder (1983) reviewed the literature on the social influence role of the supervisor and tested hypotheses derived from the counselor complexity model. They examined expectations for supervisor influence in the relationship and concluded that trainees higher in self-efficacy attached relatively greater importance to supervisor expertise and feedback than to attractiveness and support.

Since self-efficacy is a function of anticipating positive or beneficial outcomes and attributing the outcomes to one's efforts (Bandura, 1977, 1982), experiences within the supervision process that move the trainee away from support and structure toward self-direction and personal innovation would seem to facilitate an open, collegial relationship, conducive to high levels of clinical skill-building. A recent study (Berg & Stone, 1980) confirmed

that counselors of greater conceptual complexity learn best when they are provided less structured environments. Matching highly structured environments with counselors of lower complexity also facilitated learning. Higher levels of cognitive development are associated with greater autonomy and self-direction in several models (see Kegan, 198 ; Loevinger, 1976; Perry, 1970).

The emerging cognitive developmental approach to supervision has closely attended to the complementary processes of matching learning environments to the trainee's present conceptual complexity--to promote information exchange and perception of self-efficacy through successful experience--and enhancing the trainee's complexity by arranging environments that present challenge and favor autonomy in decision-making and evaluation. The cognitive-structural model that is proposed herein emphasizes the influence of language (overt and covert) in matching and challenging functions. Within the cognitive-structural context of supervision, the participants move from digital communication, in which one person (the supervisor) directs or supports the other, to analogic communication, in which both persons exchange subtle and complex information about their shared views of the world (see Haley, 1976). In the former case, directives from the powerful supervisor determine what is "right" and feedback relates to the attainment of certain standards. Evidence for progress is gleaned from how often the trainee meets the mark set by the supervisor. In the latter case, evidence for progress is determined by how easily the supervisor and counselor-in-training share perspectives as they collaboratively examine the interpersonal complexities of helping. Each style of communication has its own logic and justification

the digital frame of reference being best-suited to the traditional forms of quantitative, scientific evaluation and the analogic perspective being best-suited for qualitatively examining the phenomena of human interactions through story, metaphor, myth, and anecdote (Simons, 1978; Watzlawick, 1977).

Direction and structure in supervision may function to define "reality" and afford order amidst the chaos and uncertainty of neophyte counselor strivings. As the counselor gains certainty and sense of efficacy through successful experience, the personal and professional constructs (i.e., identities) are integrated and structure gives way to self-directed learnings. Concern shifts from demonstrating competency to a powerful other to developing clinical innovation and personal style through collaboration with a valued other. Supervisory feedback becomes less corrective and more heuristic. The relationship between the supervisor and the counselor shifts from rapport-building (support) and instruction (direction) to equitable sharing of personal discoveries and perspectives on counseling issues. The two participants develop a "supervisory working alliance" (Bordin, 1983) in which a collaborative bond enables attention to personal and technical concerns. Hart (1982) discussed at length the potential of such a hybrid model of supervision for skill-building and personal growth. Developing understanding of the concepts that define one's practice theory and the concepts that define oneself can lead to greater understanding of client concerns and more effective practice, which, after all, is the ultimate aim of supervision.

The Value of Personal Practice Theory

Supervision is often an anxiety-provoking experience in which evaluation confronts the uncertainty and confusion of the new clinician (Hess, 1980).

Attending to the specification of one's personal practice theory--even if one adopts the theory of the supervisor or the extant formulation of a founder of a school of therapy--allows the counselor-in-training to take stock of what he or she knows, rather than focusing on the unknown or on perceived shortcomings. In addition, the possession of a well-grounded conceptual framework encourages a reorientation from application of specific skills, which have been recently learned, to efficient organization of a natural, client-focused counseling style. Several authors (Brammer & Shostrom, 1977; Patterson, 1969; Ullmann & Krasner, 1965) have noted that the practitioner's ability to respond readily to client needs depends upon the explanatory and predictive powers of one's practice theory. Therefore, exploration of one's personal practice theory in supervision may contribute to reduction of anxiety, shift from self-preoccupation to client-focused counseling style, and preparation for responding more immediately to client needs.

However, the commitment invested in the practice theory can lead one to find "data," derived from the interaction with the client, that are habitually interpreted as evidence that the theory is true (Mahoney, 1976; Meehl, 1967; Thoresen, 1977). If the counselingprocess is used primarily to confirm, or substantiate, one's personal practice theory, then there is a lower probability that the counselor will be helpful to the client. The challenge of supervision provides a check and balance to the inherent subjectivism in personal practice theory building. Due to the likelihood of "confirmatory bias" and other subjective distortions, it is imperative that we strive for systematic and rigorous observation methods in counseling practice and supervision.

Becker (1973) suggested that we create and confirm theories in order to perceive control, gain certainty in our lives, and, in doing so, overcome the fear of death. Freud's zealous advocacy of psychosexual theory was interpreted as his denial of death, and as a break from the scientific methods he pioneered, contributing to dissonance in the psychoanalytic school of thought. The following observations regarding a famous supervisory relationship reveal critical variables to consider in exploring personal practice theories.

> I can still recall vividly how Freud said to me, "My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing of all. You see we must make a dogma of it, an unshakable bulwark."...There was no mistaking the fact that Freud was emotionally involved in his sexual theory to an extraordinary degree. When he spoke of it his tone became urgent, almost anxious....A strange deeply moved expression came over his face....To me the sexual theory was just as occult, that is to say, just as unproven an hypothesis, as many other speculative views. As I saw it, a scientific truth was a hypothesis which might be adequate for the moment but not to be preserved as an article of faith for all time. (Jung, 1965, pp. 149-151)

As their relationship developed over time, Jung admitted many parts of human experience into his increasingly novel practice theory that were not "relevant" or "scientific" according to Freud's extraordinary, albeit dogmatic, perspective. As Jung's views became more autonomous, their frequent disagreements lead Freud to conclude that Jung harbored death wishes for him. Freud's famous fainting episodes, in response to perceived attacks on his

theory, indicate how profoundly are tied the personal practice theory and one's view of human existence (Becker, 1973).

Two critical elements were missing in the relationship of Freud and Jung, consensus on the constructs, they labeled "scientific" and used to explicate one another's positions, and collegiality in their roles and communications. Freud found many of Jung's ideas to be occult--particularly the concerns with spirituality (see Jung, 1938, 1965)--since the innovator of psychoanalysis considered his own work to be scientific and, in addition, he rejected religious constructs as products of psychopathology. In a very fundamental sense, Freud and Jung lacked a common language for communicating their more distant beliefs; they could not agree how they would disagree. Since a primary goal of science is refutation of potentially erroneous beliefs (Popper, 1972), possession of shared "data-thing" language is essential in knowledge-building and professional discourse.

Lack of agreement regarding the basic perspectives in counseling (see Zytowski & Rosen, 1982) suggests that counseling and counselor supervision will be especially prone to conflict in communication. In psychotherapy generally, there have been several recent attempts at developing a common language to serve the emerging rapprochement among schools of therapy (Brady, Davison, Dewald, Egan, Fadiman, Frank, Gill, Hoffman, Kempler, Lazarus, Raimy, Rotter, & Strupp, 1980; Goldfried, 1980; Ryle, 1978; Sarason, 1979). Given the apparent resolution of a Kuhnian-type crisis in psychotherapy (Kuhn, 1970) in favor of a paradigm shift toward cognitive psychology (Goldfried, 1982; Mahoney, 1977; Smith, 1982), the cognitive-developmental position may generate some constructs that have broad utility in the counseling profession.

The most significant need in the developing relationship between Freud and Jung was collaboration. They could not enjoy collegiality and mutual professional growth because Freud continued to hold to directive, authoritative pronouncements in his dogmatic "supervisory style" long after Jung had experienced sufficient confirmation to venture into novel, uncharted domains that engaged him. Becker (1973) described Freud as needing his monolithic theory in order to maintain order and certainty in his life. Freud's patriarchal style was particularly omnipresent in his relations with Jung, who would have been "heir" to psychoanalysis, thus, establishing Freud's sense of immortality. Later, Jung (1976) recognized that Freud's "monotony of interpretation" indicated a flight from the dark, mystical side of himself. In this manner, Jung framed and understood the difficult passages in their relationship in terms of his own more self-confident theory. Perhaps the limitations of the hierarchal supervision model could have been overcome if both had realized that they were essentially preoccupied with the same facet of human experience, death. Indeed, Jung may have assisted Freud's elaboration of psychoanalysis had he turned his acumen for symbolism more readily to Freud's fascination with the Sphinx, the pyramids, and other images in Egyptology. However, the rift between them widened and much potential for harmonious discoveries (i.e., collaboration) was lost.

By means of examining the "supervisory relationship" of Freud and Jung, several significant values of theory-building were suggested. The most important requirement for supervision is an open exchange of communication, which attains an ideal in the form of shared strivings in collaborative theory-building. Communication is enhanced and obstacles to mutual growth

are reduced when the participants in supervision can establish some common language for organizing experiences and insights. Establishing a common language, particularly when the perspectives of supervisor and counselor-in-training are very dissimilar, requires explication of one another's personal practice theories according to some mutually accepted method. When the theory of the supervisor is "too complete," dogmatic, or inflexible, then communication and the supervisory relationship may be restricted by the supervisor's need to dictate the method for "correct" explication. The scientific method, when both participants can agree upon its uses and limitations, provides an excellent resource for organizing supervision as an equitable, growth-producing enterprise. The counselor, like the adventurer, cannot fully know what he or she is exploring, until it has been explored (see Bateson, 1972). However, the counselor can be more responsible by publically stating what is known (through personal practice theory development) and more accountable to clients by embracing the scientific method (as a road map for exploring).

The Value of Science

Science and its application in the form of research are the means by which the counselor-in-training and the supervisor can establish a common working language. The language of science functions to promote equity and collaboration in the supervisory process and to minimize the distortions arising from the practice theory of either participant. The scientific method is particulary important in instances in which the dissimilitude of trainee and supervisor perspectives could present obstacles to clinical development and personal growth.

Maslow (1976) was one of the most eloquent spokespersons for the value of science.

> The main difference between him (the scientist) and the layman is that he has enlisted in this search for truth deliberately, willingly, and consciously and that he then proceeds to learn as much as he can about the techniques and ethics of truth-seeking. Indeed, science in general can be considered a technique with which fallible men try to outwit their own human propensities to fear the truth, to avoid it, and to distort it (Maslow, 1966, p. 29).

Thus, science should be viewed as a valuable human activity that can serve as a tool in the search for truth represented by personal practice theory development.

Some of the most useful attributes of the scientific method can be found in its power to evaluate hypotheses derived from theory. While hypothesis generation, like theory development, is essentially a creative process, there are some commonly accepted rules for evaluating the merit of competing hypotheses (Copi, 1968; Feigl & Scriven, 1956). The rules, which constitute a common language for practice theory exploration, are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

The most important rule contained in the table relates to the "falsifiability" of a given hypothesis. Falsifiability of concepts and relationships among constructs renders the underlying personal practice theory subject to potential refutation. Practice theory development is intrinsically self-serving

and expansive--enabling the discovery of new truths and the elaboration of established facts. On the other hand, science is basically conservative--acting to safeguard the credibility of those professionals who would lay claim to unique knowledge. The scientific method, especially in its research applications, functions to refute most new notions, admitting only the most clearly founded alternate hypotheses to that which has been established over time.

The supervisor represents the keeper of the scientific method and the established knowledge that contributes to the unique professional perspective in counseling. The theories and hypotheses of counselors-in-training represent the futures for counseling theory and practice. Both supervisor and trainee must realize that the potential for refutation, provided by commitment to scientific practice, presents hope for the future and assurance of paradigm flexibility. Exposing one's theory to scientific scrutiny need not threaten sense of certainty or order. Rather, exposure to science will encourage responsibility, through explicit commitment to one's present point of view, and renewal, through risk of refutation as a point of departure. Counseling experience provides the foundation for personal practice theory development, which, in turn, forms the framework for effective practice and responsible research. Research experience--the organization of data derived from one's own senses--corrects one's theory, leading to greater effectiveness in personal practice.

Personal Practice Theory and Research

Although personal practice theory development is bound to one's personal perspective on research, there is a huge gap (perhaps a schism) between prac-

tice and research. As lamented by Wachtel (1980), "research" in applied psychology is what one does in order to secure grants and academic promotions. One of the major contributions of the cognitive movement has been the reframing of research as the major pursuit of the "personal scientist" (Mahoney, 1976). Research, for the scientist who is trying to improve personal practice, involves specification of underlying assumptions and beliefs, operationalization of hypotheses derived from one's theory, identification of appropriate sources of data for testing hypotheses, selection of individual-oriented research methods consistent with data identified for analysis, and application of these personally tailored-research methods in the day-to-day practice of counseling.

Lack of experience and fear of research--especially the overemphasis of statistics and other trappings of scientific "methodolatry"--present obstacles to "practicing good science." The loss of the individual in comparative group designs reduces the clinical validity and social significance of applied research. Clinical outcome research can be rendered more relevant and accessible to the practitioner by focusing upon results of practice with individual clients. In addition, there is a trend toward innovative assessment and research in which the intricacies of practice and the phenomenal observations of both client and counselor are respected (Allen, 1978; Goldman, 1976, 1978; Mahoney, 1976; Meichenbaum, 1976; Thoresen & Coates, 1978). The ongoing interest in single case approaches (Anton, 1978; Miller & Warner, 1975; Tracey, 1983) is promising. In fact, the Journal of Counseling Psychology recently published its first case study (Hill, Carter, & O'Farrell, 1983). In response to its publication, Howard (1983) emphasized this oppor-

tunity to make research more interesting and relevant for counseling practitioners. Lambert (1983) highlighted the need for a theoretical framework for understanding and drawing conclusions from empirically-oriented case studies.

Given the clear trend toward eclecticism in counseling practice (cf. Smith, 1982), there will be no single theoretical framework for organizing clinical observations and research findings. Two, rather atheoretical, frameworks seem to hold much potential for knowledge-building practice at the individual client level of analysis. The general problem-solving model, identified by D'Zurilla & Goldfried (1971) and applied in counseling training by Egan (1975), provides a generic approach to practice that facilitates testing of counselor hypotheses at different stages in the counseling process. Many supervisors and counselors-in-training have benefitted from the application of Egan's (1975) model to questions of what is "right" in counseling. A related model, the microtraining paradigm of Ivey and colleagues (Galvin & Ivey, 1981; Ivey & Authier, 1978), has even greater utility for intentionally analyzing clinical data resulting from ongoing application of one's personal practice theory. The second general framework for organizing practice development activities is a prototype for technical eclecticism, the multimodal therapy of Lazarus (1976, 1981). The use of the BASIC I.D. (Lazarus, 1981) provides common terms and categories for discussing counselor intervention, client data, and case conceptualization in supervision. The acronym enables a comprehensive, wholistic review of client concerns across the following modalities: Behavior, Affect, Sensation, Imagery, Cognition, Interpersonal Relations, and Drugs-Diet (and related physiologic

setting factors).

The microtraining and multimodal frameworks have greatest value in directing skills acquisition and case conceptualization in supervision. While they hold promise as common language bases for any point in the supervision process, they are especially useful in the early development of personal practice theories among neophyte counselors. Most trainees need to know "what stage I am in," "what skill I am using," and "what modality is the client presenting." Careful application of such frameworks probably will provide the structure necessary to integrate practice and research, develop an initial practice theory, and create a readiness for the "collaborative empiricism" (Beck, Rush, Emery, & Shaw, 1979) and "supervisory working alliance" (Bordin, 1983) that characteristics greater autonomy and trainee self-efficacy in the experience of supervision. Cognitive-constructive psychology provides an excellent model for considering development in supervision.

A Cognitive-Structural Model

Cognitive-constructive theory (Bower, 1978; Neisser, 1967, 1976; Weimer & Palermo, 1974) may provide the scientific basis for integrating truths from psychoanalytic and phenomenological theories with the empirically-derived generalizations from social learning theory (Arnkoff, 1980; Goldfried, 1982; Mahoney, 1974, 1977; Meichenbaum, 1977; Wachtel, 1977). Constructive theory uses an information-processing model to elaborate such constructs as model, schema, invariant, and deep-structure. A model is a cognitive map of the structural relations among events, formed in the nervous system by early life experiences and used constructively to process and classify new parti-

cular events (Neisser, 1976). One's model of the counseling process (indeed, notions about change generally in life) is a set of guiding principles, determining what can be learned at a given point in time through interactions with the counseling environment. A model, like the personal practice theory, is similar to a set of spectacles through which one views the world. The present personal practice theory determines what attributes of counseling experience receive attention. Some facets of any counseling interaction have no meaning for the trainee and, therefore, they are ignored or they simply are not registered in the information-processing system. A schema is the component of the larger model that organizes perception and directs action (Neisser, 1976). In the cognitive-structural model of supervision, a schema can be considered the network of constructs organized to provide efficient interpretation of the complex array of experiences constituting the counseling process. The schemata usually function in concert to maintain the personal practice theory through ongoing interpretation of data as confirming the deeply-held beliefs, classifications, and information-processing rules. Schemata can be identified by asking counselors-in-training to respond to certain questions in stating their personal practice theories. A set of heuristic questions for identifying and, later, elaborating important schemata are offered in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

If a model is like a pair of spectacles, determining what will be one's focus upon the world, then a schema may be considered that part of a lens that

filters light according to its optical properties. In the general case, a schema can be treated like the color or tint in a pair of light-sensitive sunglasses. It admits certain wave lengths of light and rejects others. The process of filtering light may change the shade or depth of tint according to the features of the light that are admitted. In the analogy, a feature of mid-day sunlight is brightness, an "invariant" characteristic that will affect the light-sensitive sunglasses. According to Gibson (1966), an invariant is some characteristic that is relatively fixed across situations such that it affords certain meanings. In the ecological environment of counseling, one invariant is a "client seeking help." This basic characteristic allows the counseling professional perspective (a model) to operate. Then, the schemata of the individual counselor interpret the various meanings afforded by the invariant; determining who is the client, what sort of help is needed, when and where help should be delivered, and which responses of the client should be accepted as data for assessing change and effects of helping. The interaction of invariants and schemata over time (i.e., experience) may lead to changes in cognitive structures affording new interpretations and better clinical judgment.

The relations between events and thoughts reflect the rules regarding invariants and transformations among classifications, or "deep structure." We are not explicitly aware of deep structure, which represents "tacit knowledge" (Polanyi, 1966), but it determines the meaning of surface structure. Self-efficacy, the set of expectations related to sense of control over the environment and to attribution of personal agency in some cause-and-effect sequence, may represent the most fundamental deep structure. Self-efficacy

is a major construct in several schools of thoughts, which use different terms and theoretical frameworks for explaining the phenomenon in behavior change (e.g., Hartmann, 1967; Rogers, 1961; Rokeach, 1973). Self-efficacy expectations represent the deep structural rules underlying fear and defensive behavior, as well as, anxiety and depression (Arnkoff, 1980; Beck, 1976; Beck et al., 1979). Therefore, sense of self-efficacy is a critical variable is counseling practice and supervision.

Arnkoff (1980) offered a clinical example of the constructive process that can be modified for use in describing a problematic supervisiory relationship. If certain events consistently convey the message of "failure" and the counselor is sensitized to the experience of failure, then different particular events in the future that have a similar meaning may lead to the self-efficacy statement, "I will be an inadequate counselor." Supervisory feedback such as, "You failed to acknowledge the client's feelings here," may cue cognitive distortions associated with the dysfunctional schema, "I cannot deal with emotions." In the process, the negative view of the self (low self-efficacy) is strengthened and the counselor increasingly attends to data which affords the sense of failure. With declining self-efficacy the counselor becomes more irrational in processing feedback and more rigid and automatic in behavior. Yet, the supervisory process is intended to encourage greater flexibility and self-confidence, thus enabling collaboration in supervision and cognitive development.

Bandura (1977) indicated that performance-based techniques, involving specific demonstration, active participant modeling, and practice, are the most effective for building self-efficacy. Similarly, Thoresen and Coates

(1978) called for strategies involving direct action in order to overcome the cognitive distortions and "circularity" of beliefs that characterize many problems. The "self-as-a-model" technique (Hosford, 1980) is very promising for developing both skill and self-efficacy. In the technique, the counselor receives videotaped feedback of only skilled performances and successful outcomes--undesired behavioral samples are deleted from the feedback. The trainee receives graduated exposure to new experiences that exert immediate impact upon central schemata, and empirical feedback that is framed in such a manner that readily identifiable invariants afford positive self-perceptions. Another method for enhancing self-efficacy is to build the supervisory relationship upon a solid foundation of empathic responding.

The supervisor can provide immediate, rather direct data regarding his or her experiencing of the counselor-in-training. When accurate reflections of the trainee's messages are offered as feedback (rather than directive or evaluative information), the counselor is likely to experience the invariant of "being understood" by a significant other. When information of a confirmatory nature is provided by the supervisor, the counselor's schemata will accept it and guide movement in a search for more data. That is, the trainee will allow the supervisor to "join" the information-processing system, setting the stage for additional communication, closer self-examination, and potential change of the personal practice theory. Fostering new practice perspective is made possible by empathic understanding and developing trust, the perception that the supervisor is acting with the trainee's best interests at heart.

Changes in personal practice theory result from the supervisor contri-

buting some "new information" to the counselor in the forms of suggestion, confrontation, clarification, disputation, or interpretation. The key to the influence of new information in the change process is that it breaks out of the confirmatory mold of empathy and induces discrepancy or dissonance. As a result of experiencing this psychological inconsistency or imbalance, the counselor will attempt to reduce disturbance and re-establish congruence by changing actions, feelings, or thoughts (Festinger, 1957; Sheras & Worchel, 1979; Strong & Matross, 1973). The trainee could attempt to devalue the supervisor's remarks by impugning the person's motives or expertise. Provided the supervisor has worked to establish expertness, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (see Kerr, Claiborn, & Dixon, 1982), the supervisor is likely to possess sufficient interpersonal influence to encourage trainee self-exploration. Counselors-in-training are most likely to entertain changes in their personal practice theories when they experience dissonance from novel feedback and they perceive freedom to choose from among desirable alternatives (Sheras & Worchel, 1979). Therefore, the supervisor should not only provide heuristic feedback, but also, resources for developing a broad range of cognitive and behavioral competencies from which a trainee may choose. Ultimately, supervisor and supervisee will alternate roles in order to provide confirmation and challenge to one another in mutual existential-developmental efforts.

Summary

Direction, structure, and control are important considerations in the supervisory relationship. Structure and supportive information regarding how well a trainee is doing are important in the early supervision processes,

particularly when the counselor-in-training has little clinical experience from which to draw. When demand and supervisor control are too great in the ongoing relationship, the trainee may be stifled or may devalue the supervision. Counseling trainees with high pre-supervision levels of self-efficacy and conceptual complexity (abstractness) are most likely to reject supervisory structure and support. They are ready to explore the limits of their personal practice theories provided they perceive the opportunities to choose from alternative perspectives on the counseling process. All trainees have the potential to develop their skills and practice theories, and, along the way, move toward autonomy and self-efficacy in an ideal collaborative supervisory relationship.

Supervisor empathy and action-oriented self-as-a-model strategies have potential for confirming basic cognitive schemata and opening the channels for communication. When trainees experience confirmation, they are ready to process new information provided by the following supervisor contributions: suggestion, confrontation, clarification, disputation, and interpretation. Novel information from the supervisor can lead to counselor self-exploration of the personal practice theory, increased cognitive and behavioral flexibility, cognitive-developmental growth for the trainee (and ideally the supervisor), and more effective service for clients. Research and theory-building are complementary processes in supervision, promoting greater openness to practice innovations and reducing the cognitive distortions that inhibit counselor and client growth. The cognitive-structural approach to supervision is proposed as a framework for understanding and discussing common elements in professional counseling. The approach may have utility in a profession this is increasingly eclectic and cognitive in orientation.

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Table 1

Rules for Evaluating Hypotheses

1. A good hypothesis must be relevant to the question it attempts to answer, to the data it attempts to explain.
2. A good hypothesis must be falsifiable to the extent that it can be put to the empirical test, leading to either confirmation or refutation.
3. A good hypothesis must be compatible with known facts and principles, and previously established hypotheses.
4. A good hypothesis should have greater predictive or explanatory power than a competing hypothesis -- a greater range of observable facts can be deduced from it.
5. A good hypothesis should have greater simplicity than a competing hypothesis.

Table 2

Questions for Exploring Personal Practice Theories

1. What is the nature of humankind? Are persons basically good, evil, or neutral? Are these questions relevant in your practice theory?
2. What is the nature of human development? How does the counselor facilitate growth in intellectual, personal, social, and/or occupational domains? What is the risk that counseling will present obstacles to growth or setbacks in development?
3. How are counseling concerns specified? When do you know that a client has a concern that can be addressed by counseling? What are the functions of assessment in your theory?
4. What are the major methods or features of the counseling process that enable beneficial change for a client? Are there specific techniques that are applied in the counseling relationship? When should a given technique be used?
5. How does one determine that counseling has been effective, or helpful? What are the anticipated and actual outcomes of the overall counseling effort? What evidence are you willing to accept as indication that beneficial change has occurred?